

AN INVITATION

The Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Spiritual Formation Program encourages Friends to listen carefully to God's call in their lives. All who wish to deepen their spiritual lives are invited to join a spiritual formation group.

This includes participation in a local group and attendance at both an opening and closing retreat along with members of other spiritual formation groups.

Through the retreats and regular local group meetings, participants create with one another a close faith community for spiritual growth, mutual support, and encouragement. The group provides a structured, supportive community in which each member can discern the divine call and prepare to follow it.

TWO RETREATS

In the autumn, Friends and attenders from the various monthly meetings and worship groups throughout Lake Erie Yearly Meeting gather for the first of two retreats to begin their commitment to a year in supportive community.

During this retreat we reflect on our spiritual yearnings and discern personal spiritual practices that nourish, support, and further our intentions toward Spirit. Both in community and in solitude we listen faithfully to the Inner Light, and seek to support and encourage one another in this discernment process.

"I found the retreats perfect for preparing me for my spiritual work."

As part of the retreat program, each local group begins building its local meeting schedule, agrees on any local group expectations, and selects readings for the year.

The concluding retreat in the spring provides a worshipful opportunity to share insights, and to evaluate and enlarge on the program, as we have lived it out in our daily lives.

All participants in each local group are encouraged to attend these vital retreats of community formation.

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Each person undertakes a committed spiritual practice for the year, which is in keeping with his or her spiritual intention. This is a critical component of the Spiritual Formation Program.



Friends have chosen both traditional and non-traditional spiritual practices, such as journaling, meditation, yoga, daily worship or prayer, devotional reading, chanting, or mindful walking. Some practices may become lifelong exercises. Some may provide unexpected and creative avenues to an experience of the divine.



The Leaven Center Lodge

Some participants find that their practice enables them both to cope with the pressures of the daily world and to enjoy deeper spiritual experience.

Many participants find that the experience of sharing their journey with a small and caring group of Friends helps them feel more connected to the monthly meeting. Everyone gains from the process of sharing and being supported on our journeys.

Could this be the year that you gather with Friends to see where Spirit may lead you, together?

"Discipline is remembering what you want."

"This is a very nurturing program."

LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS

Each Spiritual Formation Group in worshipful process will select a set of spiritual readings for the coming nine-month cycle and schedule local meeting times to discuss the impact the readings have had on them.

Through the nine months the local group gathers to worship and discuss responses to the reading that participants have agreed to engage with that month. These can include books about topics such as spiritual experience, prayer, community, the Religious Society of



Friends, scripture, social justice, spiritual journals, or ministry.

Smaller groups of three to six persons within the local groups are also formed to meet on another day each month to relate their on-going experiences of the daily spiritual practice undertaken during the nine-month cycle. Many insights and deep relationships are forged in this intimate exchange.

"Just showing up regularly and sharing personal spiritual experiences helps keep me in touch with the spiritual in my daily life."

If you've felt the hunger for a deeper experience of faith, and for companions on the journey, you are invited to join us!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://leym.quaker.org>

"It is because of this group that I remain as involved in my monthly meeting as I am."

The Spiritual Formation Program is sponsored by the Ministry and Nurture Committee of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

DO YOU SEEK A DEEPER SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE?

Thou must join in with the beginnings of life, and be exercised with the day of small things, before thou meet with the great things, wherein is the clearness and satisfaction of the soul... But the travels begin at the breakings of day, wherein are but glimmerings or little light... Yet there must the traveler begin and travel; and in his faithful travels...the light will break in upon him more and more."

Isaac Penington, 1665



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